THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) On 08.09.2007 a private twin engine aircraft operated by M/s Joy Alukkas Traders (India) Pvt. Ltd. was involved in an accident at Bangalore. An Inspector of Accidents appointed by Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) under Rule 71 of the Aircraft Rules, 1937 is still investigating the accident. Preliminary investigation of the accident revealed that the aircraft was refueled with ATF instead of requisite AVGAS 100LL.

Clearance for Air Kerala

12. PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of Kerala has asked for the approval of the Central Government to start a budget airline named 'Air Kerala';

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the approval has been given; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (d) Though no proposal for formation of any airline by the name 'Air Kerala' is pending with the Government for clearance, the Government of Kerala had informed that a public limited company, 'Air Kerala International Services Limited' has been registered as a Special Purpose Vehicle for a budget airline project. Government of Kerala requested this Ministry for exemption to the proposed airline from the stipulated conditions relating to fleet size and the length of operation in the domestic sector for an airline to be considered for international operations. This request was not considered in the light of the existing Government policy regarding the minimum fleet size of 20 aircraft and experience of 5 years continuous operations in domestic sector for permitting an Indian scheduled carrier to operate international services.

Air services in the country

13. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a quantum leap in the number of airlines, aircrafts, flights and passengers in the recent past in the country;

(b) whether there is no matching improvement in services provided by the airlines or the airport authorities to the passengers;

(c) whether Government proposes to revise the Airport Policy;

(d) whether it is also proposed to establish multiple airports in metropolitan cities in keeping with the practice world wide; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Airports Authority of India has taken measures to deal with the increase in air traffic in the country by augmenting the infrastructure at airports. The measures taken *inter alia*

include enhancing the capacity of terminal buildings, construction of more parking stands for aircraft and provision of longer/additional runways etc. Airlines have also taken action for enhancing their fleet and other associated facilities.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) and (e) As per the existing Airport Insfrastructure Policy, 1997, multiple airports can be allowed in Metropolitan Cities in case there is sufficient demand for traffic.

NOC for height of building structures near airports

14. DR. V. MAITREYAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of applications received from each Zone of the country by Airports Authority of India (AAI) every year, zone-wise for clearance of the height of building structures adjacent to the airport zones;

(b) whether it is a fact that there are many applications pending for clearance for more than a year also with AAI;

(c) if so, the reasons for such huge backlog in the department;

(d) what steps are being taken to speed up the process of issuing NOC for the applications; and

(e) when the backlog of pending applications is likely to be cleared?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Total number of applications received from each region from January, 2007 to December, 2007 are Northern Region—209, Eastern Region—121, Western Region—475 and Southern Region—985.

(b) and (c) 55 applications are pending for period exceeding one year primarily due to incomplete data provided by the applicants.

(d) and (e) The Government had appointed a Committee of Technical Experts headed by the Director General of Civil Aviation to review the requirements for and procedures to be followed in such cases. In pursuance of the recommendations of the Committee, it has been, *inter alia,* decided to decentralise the process to local/regional level. These measures are likely to considerably reduce the time taken in according clearance in such cases.

Setting up of airport at Sikkim

†15. SHRI O.T. LEPCHA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has allotted any land for construction of an airport at Gangtok in Sikkim; if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether Government has formulated any plan to construct airport at Gangtok; and

(c) by when the construction work of the said airport is likely to be started?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Government of Sikkim has acquired 200 acres of land for construction of new Greenfield airport, suitable for operations by ATR-72

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.